

Oral Questions

The Ontario premier reasserted last week his refusal to recognize officially or even symbolically both official languages of Canada. Since Mr. Davis has also scorned the efforts of the federal government to achieve linguistic equality, can the Secretary of State tell the House whether Ontario has received its fair share of federal funds allocated to support official language training and utilization programs or whether the substantial efforts and contributions of the federal government to promote the official languages were supposed to be purely symbolic?

Hon. John Roberts (Secretary of State): Yes, Mr. Speaker, to this date, the Ontario government has received nearly \$150 million to support minority education programs in Ontario as well as second language education. This is why I greatly deplore the fact that the Ontario premier has said that we have not supported the development of the education system in the province of Ontario. This is completely inaccurate.

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[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

CANADIAN RAILROAD WORKERS EMPLOYED BY UNITED STATES RAILROADS—ENTITLEMENT TO BENEFITS

Mr. Bob Brisco (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Employment and Immigration. A number of Canadian railroad workers are employed in Canada by United States railroads and do not qualify for unemployment insurance benefits; rather, they must accept the benefits accorded by the United States unemployment insurance system. Will the minister undertake to examine the possibility of being included in the scheme to receive Canadian benefits, which are superior to those of the United States?

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I have noted the hon. member's representation and I will look at it.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS

RIGHT OF FISHERMEN TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING PROCESS

Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Labour. Was the minister speaking on his own, or after consultation with his colleagues—in particular, the Minister of Fisheries and the Environment—when he told the United Fishermen in Vancouver recently that he would do everything in his power to obtain for that union the right to represent all fishermen on the west coast for collective bargaining purposes? Further, does he consider that it is within his ministerial responsibility to give such an undertaking?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of Labour): No, Mr. Speaker. What I did say was correctly reported in any press reports I

[Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier).]

have seen. I have no idea what the hon. member is reading from. There have been submissions from the fishermen that the Canada Labour Code be amended in such a way as to give them the right to certification, which they do not now have as a result of various interpretations of sections in the Canada Labour Code as it is now worded. I told them that I was taking to my colleagues in government proposals to amend the Canada Labour Code so that they, like other unions, if they had all the other qualifications in terms of support, and so on, could apply for certification to obtain bargaining rights.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): When considering this question, will the minister also take into account the representations made to him by the Pacific Trollers' Association and by the Fishing Vessel Owners' Association of the province of British Columbia. They are small businessmen and not necessarily capable of or desirous of entering into a union arrangement?

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): As I say, this would give them the right, if the code is amended, to obtain certification if they have the qualified support in terms of necessary percentages, and so on. They are all elaborated in the act. I do not think any group of workers should be denied that right, nor do I think they should in this particular instance. May I also say, yes, to the hon. member; I have taken into account the concerns of the people the hon. member mentioned.

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TRANSPORT

RETURN OF CANADIAN RAILWAY CARS NOW IN UNITED STATES

Mr. Elmer M. MacKay (Central Nova): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question for the Minister of Transport. Some Nova Scotia pulp operations, and perhaps operations in other provinces, are being affected by a shortage of suitable railway rolling stock. Is the minister aware of this situation? Are plans being implemented to secure a more efficient and businesslike way of returning railway cars to this country that are now in the United States?

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the railways have been aware for some time of a problem developing in the return of railway cars from the United States for servicing that market from Canadian plants and sources. This led the other day to CNR placing an embargo on further cars going to the United States. The problem may have been building up. It was certainly greatly aggravated by severe storms in the United States which prevented the normal movement of cars on to sidings for unloading purposes. A very high percentage of CN lumber or pulp cars is now in the United States. An effort has to be made to bring them back. The railways are very much aware of this, and will do everything they can to try to shorten the period during which there is a shortage of cars.